

and massage, or faradisation over the abdomen, with the exhibition of strychnia internally may be necessary.

In prescribing pills for constipation, it is better to have them made fresh, for, notwithstanding the reliability of the many large drug firms, coated pills often become very hard and difficult of absorption.

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### ETHER AS A GENERAL ANÆSTHETIC.

In the present day, when additions are being constantly made to the number of operations, and when many of these, especially in the departments of abdominal surgery and gynecology, require a considerable time for their completion, the choice of an anæsthetic becomes a matter of importance. While expedition is desirable in any operation, *festina lente* should be the motto of a good surgeon. "Hurry," says the author of 'Lacon,' "is the sign of a weak mind—despatch, of a strong one." And we are safe in saying that he who hurries in surgery is lost, as far as successful results are concerned.

The use of ether as a general anæsthetic is largely taking the place of chloroform everywhere. In the United States, in all the important medical centres, ether is almost entirely used, and in Europe there is a strong disposition to adopt it in the large majority of cases. At Lyons, in France, ether has been used since 1849 as the anæsthetic. In Paris, up to very lately, chloroform was used, as ether was thought too slow in its effects, but within the last year opinions have changed materially with regard to it.

While in very muscular subjects the development of complete anæsthesia may be a little slow, and the quantity of ether required may be considerable, after a little practice the time required can be reduced to a minimum, and in its liberal use one is comparatively free from that trepidation which is always present in the administration of chloroform, even with the greatest care. Vallas, a French writer, gives ten minutes as a mean time to produce anæsthesia with chloroform and thirteen for ether; but even a shorter mean time is often obtainable.

The inconvenience arising from the accumulation of mucus and saliva in the mouth requires, of

course, attention, but it is a drawback of minor importance.

If the pupils and the respiration are attended to, as well as looking out for any marked lividity, we can work for an hour or an hour and a half with decided comfort.

It has been objected that ether does not produce as decided a muscular relaxation as chloroform, and is therefore less suited for laparotomy and operations on the uterus and appendages than the latter. This objection, however, is not found to be sufficiently decided to influence those who operate extensively on this side of the Atlantic. Continental statistics are very much in favor of the use of ether.

Tulliard, in 1891, reports one death in 3,258 where chloroform was used, and only one in 13,987 where ether was the anæsthetic: Campbell, one death in 2,807 chloroform, and one in 13,966 ether.

Of course, there are certain contra-indications to the use of ether. For example, operations on the face may be considered unfavorable for ether alone, though Abbey, of New York, uses it on children in cases of hair-lip. Where there is decided pulmonary affection, such as bronchitis or emphysema, it is not admissible.

To cite a case showing the difficulties that may arise in the choice of an anæsthetic: A woman of 70, healthy-looking, and with a good history, developed a scirrhus of the right breast which she was advised to have removed. She had a somewhat weak heart and also some bronchial irritation. Her age and the condition of her heart contra-indicated chloroform. The bronchial trouble did not favor ether. It was, however, used, and though she stood it well apparently, a broncho-pneumonia developed after the operation, which carried her off.

In operations requiring the use of the cautery or artificial light—other than electric—great care must be exercised. In the very young and the aged ether is perhaps not as suitable as chloroform.

With ordinary care, however, a simple inhaler—an ordinary cone, covered with gauze and padded with absorbent cotton—is sufficient.

With regard to inhalers, Clover's is no doubt the most economical as regards the ether, and is in some respects the most scientific, as it regulates the quantity inspired and does not require removal from the face to be replenished. There may be